



#InsureWisely

Insure yourself wisely



Introduction

Over the course of our lives, most of us experience a number of key events, such as buying a home, changing jobs, buying a car, planning a trip abroad or starting a family. These important and exciting events may also come with risks. This booklet explores some of those events and looks at how to best use the many different types of insurance that are available in order to help you manage the related risks and your financial planning.

Insurance works by pooling the losses of the few to be spread among the many. For many common, predictable risks, insurers are able to calculate their likely frequency and cost to the pool. They can then sell individual insurance policies which, for a smaller, known premium, give you the peace of mind and security to carry out your daily activities because you no longer face the risk of a larger, potentially unaffordable loss. Indeed, without insurance, many aspects of modern societies could not function because the risks to the individual person or business would simply be too great.

Recent events have shown just how important it is to make the right financial decisions and to understand the financial products you buy. For insurance, it is particularly important to understand exactly what your policy does — and does not — cover.

This booklet provides advice on the following topics:

- Financial planning and saving for your retirement
- Health insurance and a healthy lifestyle
- Home insurance and being prepared for natural catastrophes
- Motor insurance and what to do if you have an accident
- Travel insurance



Insure yourself wisely in three steps

Insurance can help protect you through many of life's twists and turns. Here are three important things to remember:

Choosing the right policy for you

It is worth taking the time to do a little research to find the insurance policy that best suits your needs.

Take the time to identify what your needs are and to understand what the insurance policy proposal covers, what is excluded and what your rights and responsibilities are. Your insurer can advise if you are unsure about what level of cover you need. Be sure to also check what may already be covered under your existing insurance policies to avoid unnecessary overlaps.

Remember that you can shop around to get the right policy for your needs at the best price. However, don't just focus on the price of the policy — make sure what it covers is right for your needs.

Reviewing your coverage regularly

Don't wait until you need to make a claim to check the details of your insurance contract. To be better prepared when an event occurs, take the time to read and understand the terms and conditions, including what is covered and what possible exclusions there might be.

You should also review your existing policies regularly to avoid any gaps in your insurance coverage. It is important to check whether your cover needs updating, especially if there have been any changes to your situation, such as getting married, buying a home, starting a family or a teenager starting to drive.

Furthermore, it is worth taking a regular inventory of your possessions and making copies of all your important documents, such as your passport and ID card.

Making a claim

Should an unwanted event occur and you do need to make a claim, contact your insurer immediately for assistance and advice.

To help your insurer deal with your claim quickly and efficiently, provide as much information as possible about the event. If possible, record all the details of your loss and take photos and videos of the damage to help support your claim. Provide your insurer with police reports, if appropriate, and give your insurer any receipts you have for items that have been damaged or stolen. Remember that credit card or bank statements can also show proof of purchase.



Planning for the future

Financial planning is something that is very easy to put off and thinking far ahead about retirement needs is hard. There are always more urgent or enjoyable things to do.

Many young — and not so young — people believe that pensions are something to think about at a later stage in life and postpone pension-related decisions. However, it is important to have a long-term financial plan to help you to reach your long-term goals, such as having a retirement income that enables you to maintain your lifestyle.

Be prepared

A fact to keep in mind when planning is that Europeans are now living longer. While today there are four workers per retired person, in the future there will be just two.

This requires you to take additional steps to ensure you will enjoy sufficient income to meet your needs in retirement.

Many people are at significant risk of realising too late that their pension will not be enough to ensure an adequate standard of living. To avoid this happening to you, it is important to look into your personal financial situation on a regular basis.

Many European countries have set up pension tracking tools that can give an overview of your future pension entitlements. These usually cover your state retirement income and your occupational pensions (via your professional activity or employment).

Also, if you receive an annual statement providing an overview of your current personal pension savings (your voluntary retirement savings) and what they might translate into in terms of expected benefits, why not take a look to see if you are saving enough?



Save for your future wisely

Saving early and enough for your retirement is critically important for your financial health.

The amount you need to save is unique to you. It will depend on your expected future needs in retirement and the income required to cover them.

Important life events such as getting married, moving abroad or changing your job can also have an impact on your retirement plans.

Insurers provide different types of long-term savings solutions, including occupational pensions and personal pensions.

The products offered by insurers often combine an investment element with some form of protection, for example financial guarantees protecting the money you invested. Protection can also be offered against the risk that you outlive your savings, through a lifetime annuity.

Your insurer can help you to find the product that best suits your needs.



A healthy lifestyle

Leading a healthy life should be an everyday priority, not just a new year's resolution. Healthy habits, such as eating well, being active and getting enough sleep are important for your physical, mental and emotional health. And if you become sick or are injured, private health insurance can assist you on the road to recovery by helping to cover the medical costs.

Invest in your health

Due to our busy, modern lives, many of us spend a lot of time indoors, often sitting behind a desk for hours.

Small daily changes can help you live a healthier life: walking or cycling instead of driving, taking the stairs instead of the lift, eating a healthy, balanced diet and getting a good night's sleep.

Investing in your health will not only improve your quality of life but might also lower your risk of future illnesses.



Explore new options

Technological innovations, such as health apps and "wearables" that monitor sleep patterns or levels of exercise, can help you to take control of your health and well-being.

You could also look into the services or programmes that some insurers offer to give health tips or advice. Typically, when you participate in such a programme and agree to share the relevant data with your insurer, they can provide you with lifestyle tips and advice on the preventive measures you can take to reduce the risks of chronic diseases and to control medical costs.



Insure yourself wisely

Having private health insurance gives you the peace of mind to know that you can get the medical treatment you need, when you need it. The role of private health insurance varies significantly between countries due to the differences in national health and social security systems.

Private health insurance in Europe takes four basic forms, or a combination of them:

- **Additional** (complementary and supplementary) insurance is voluntary cover to complete the health insurance needs of the statutory insured (as in Denmark, France and Italy).
- **Substitute** insurance replaces publicly funded healthcare (as in Germany for the self-employed).
- **Duplicate** insurance operates as a private alternative in parallel to the public system (as in the UK, Spain and Portugal).
- **Mandatory** private health regimes include some public aspects and fully private complementary cover (as in the Netherlands and Switzerland).



In some cases, private health insurers also offer other elements, such as critical illness or disability cover.

Make sure that you choose the right cover for you. Your needs might change as a result of major life events, such as starting a family or moving abroad, so review your cover regularly to ensure that your insurance policy still fits your needs. When you are planning a holiday, also remember to check your health insurance coverage.



No place like home

Buying a house is often the biggest investment a person ever makes, and insurance is the best way to protect it and your belongings against threats such as flood, fire or theft. Keep in mind that the type of insurance you need may depend on whether you are a homeowner or renting.

Insure yourself wisely

Home or buildings insurance generally covers you against the cost of repairing or rebuilding your home and its fixtures and fittings (eg fitted kitchen units), while home contents insurance will typically cover some or all of the cost of replacing or repairing your possessions if they are damaged or stolen.

Take the time to understand what your insurance covers, what is excluded and what your rights and responsibilities are. It is important that the amount insured by your policy (the "sum insured") is correct, as this is the maximum your insurer will pay out if you make a claim. Your insurer can advise you on what level of cover you need. Remember that you can shop around to get the right policy for your needs at the best price.

Avoid any gaps in your insurance coverage by reviewing your home insurance and home contents policies regularly. This is particularly important if your situation has changed, such as getting married or your children leaving home. The same is true if you have carried out any renovations or if you have bought any expensive items, such as jewellery or paintings. Don't forget to take a regular inventory of your possessions.



Protect your home

However well insured you are, damage to your home and its contents is distressing, particularly if you have belongings with sentimental value. You can reduce the risk of unwelcome events by making your house more resilient to everyday perils. Your insurer can offer advice on which risk prevention measures you could implement. For example, if you live in an area that is prone to flooding, there are a number of measures you can take to prevent your possessions being damaged by water. And some insurers may offer discounts on your insurance premium if you make certain safety improvements to your home, such as installing smoke detectors, a burglar alarm or deadbolts.

Should an unwanted event occur and you do need to make a claim, you should contact your insurer as soon as possible so that claims handlers can visit your property to assess the damage. To help your insurer deal with your claim quickly and efficiently, provide as much information as possible about the event.

Take photographs of damage to your home and its contents and provide your insurer with police reports, if appropriate, and any receipts you have for items that have been damaged or stolen. Credit card or bank statements can also show proof of purchase.

Through technological innovations, such as connected, “smart home” devices, insurers can help you avoid some of the risks you may face. Examples include smart thermostats that turn up the temperature if very cold weather is forecast to avoid frozen pipes and subsequent water damage or smart boilers that remind you when they need servicing. Why not explore some of these new options to see how they can work for you?



Be prepared for natural catastrophes

Natural catastrophes have the potential to cause serious damage to your home and personal belongings. While meteorological events such as storms, floods or drought are usually unpredictable and outside your control, you can take steps to reduce the likelihood of loss.

Prevention is the best protection, so familiarise yourself with the possible risks in your area and what to do when an emergency arises. In several countries, the (re)insurance industry has developed risk and hazard maps and zoning tools that can help you to assess the possible risks you face. Some insurers also offer risk-reduction services, such as alerts about extreme weather events like torrential rain or hailstorms. Make sure you take all the necessary precautions to protect your personal property. For example, if you live in an area that is vulnerable to flooding, see what steps you can take to reinforce and protect your home against the risk of flood damage.

Having an appropriate insurance policy will help you recover financially from damage or losses as a result of a natural catastrophe. Before buying a specific natural catastrophe insurance policy, check what may already be covered under your existing policies (eg home, motor or home contents insurance) to avoid overlaps or gaps in your coverage. Be sure to read and understand the terms and conditions of your policy, including what is covered and what possible exclusions there might be. If you carry out any renovations or make any structural reinforcements to your property, be sure to inform your insurer so that this can be reflected in your policy.



Behind the wheel

Buying a car is the first big purchase many people make. Most people know that having insurance for their car is compulsory. Many people, however, do not realise that even if their car, motorbike or moped is off the road and not being used, they could still be legally obliged to insure it, so check the rules in your country.

Insure yourself wisely

Motor third-party liability (MTPL) insurance is compulsory across the EU. It provides financial protection against claims for property damage and/or bodily injury resulting from road accidents in which you were involved.

Comprehensive motor insurance offers additional financial protection for first-party losses (ie your own injuries or property damage) and, in some cases, fire, theft and breakdown services. So it is important not just to focus on the price of a policy, but to look at what it covers. If you are unsure about the level of cover you need for the use you make of your vehicle, check with your insurer.

Technology is drastically changing motor insurance. As cars are increasingly connected and automated, new types of insurance policies are emerging, based on your actual style of driving. Why not look into these options?

Ride-sharing and peer-to-peer car-sharing platforms are options you may also want to explore. However, this changes the type of insurance cover you need, so make sure you inform your insurer. Your existing motor insurance policy may not cover you, but new products are constantly being developed to cater for evolving needs.



Be prepared

Good vehicle maintenance is essential, especially in winter, when rain, snow and ice can make driving more hazardous. Make sure you prepare your vehicle for the winter and adapt your driving. Some motor policies (or indeed national laws) require you to fit winter tyres, for instance, so check the terms and conditions of your policy carefully.

You should also let your insurer know if you would like your family or friends to drive your vehicle, as they may not be covered by your policy. In some cases, their own insurance may cover them, but they should always check their policy or speak to their insurer first.




Drive wisely

In these increasingly connected times, drivers can be easily distracted. When you are on the road — whether alone or with passengers — driving safely should always be your top priority. Remember, for instance, that checking your (smart)phone while driving is the cause of many accidents.

If you are involved in an accident, collect as much information as possible about the other vehicle's owner and driver, ideally by filling in the European Accident Statement (EAS), an equivalent form or mobile application from your insurer.

The EAS ensures that the parties to an accident exchange the relevant information for insurers and, if possible, agree on the facts of the accident. It is available in multiple languages, which all follow the same format and question order to facilitate the exchange of information.

If you have an accident abroad, you can refer to the [InsureWisely step-by-step guide](#).



What to do if you have a road accident abroad

Driving across borders is an everyday reality in Europe and accidents between vehicles from different countries are common. This leaflet provides a step-by-step guide to what you should do if you are involved in a road accident while travelling abroad.

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- 1. Be prepared**

Write your motor insurance policy covers you when travelling in another European country, you may need to purchase additional insurance cover in order to receive the same amount of compensation for an accident abroad as you would for an accident at home. It is important that you contact your insurer for advice about the possible need for such additional cover and which type would best meet your needs.

If you have an accident abroad, it is the law of the country in which the accident occurs that applies. Your claim for compensation (property damage and personal injury) may therefore need to be submitted and handled differently to how it would be in your country of residence.
- 2. At the scene**

If you are involved in an accident, collect as much information as possible about the other vehicle's owner and driver. Fill in the European Accident Statement or an equivalent form from your insurance company. The other party may ask you to fill in a European Accident Statement. It is perfectly safe for you to complete and sign this document, if you keep a duplicate of the document with the other party's signature. It is a way of ensuring that the parties to an accident exchange the relevant information and, if possible, agree on how the accident occurred, regardless of whether they speak the same language.

If you do not have a European Accident Statement or insurance form, ideally write down the following information:

 - Date, place and country of the accident
 - Name and contact details of the other party (owner/driver/representative of the other vehicle)
 - Name and contact details of the other party's motor third party liability (MTP/L) insurer
 - The policy number or green card number from any insurance documents presented at the scene
 - Registration number(s) of the other party's vehicle. If it's a lorry or a tractor towing a farm tractor, note the registration plates of the towing vehicle and of the trailer, as the registration plates may differ
 - Country of registration of the other party's vehicle
 - Make and type of the other party's vehicle
 - Names and contact details of any witnesses
 - Information (eg address and reference) about the police authorities to which the accident has been reported
 - The circumstances of the accident. If both parties agree on these, it is recommended that both parties sign a statement.

Contact the local police. In some countries, the police only go to the scene of the accident and complete a report if one of the parties has been injured or if multiple vehicles are involved. You should have any documentation that the police give you, in case you need it to pursue your claim.

If possible, take photographs of the accident scene and the damaged vehicles (including the registration numbers).
- 3. When you get home**

You can submit your claim in your country of residence, in your own language, to a claims representative of the other party's motor insurer. Your insurer (or your legal expenses insurer) may be able to assist you.

To find the representative's details, contact the information centre in your country of residence. If you know the name of the insurer, the information centre can provide you with the claims representative contact details. If not, they will find the other party's insurer and its claims representative from the vehicle registration number, make and model of the vehicle and any other details you provide them with.

If the foreign insurer has not appointed a representative in your country of residence, you can send your claim to the national compensation body. This body also intervenes when the other party's vehicle is uninsured or the insurer could not be identified, if the accident occurs in an EU country.

Points to remember:



 - The time limit for submitting your claim may be different from the one in your country of residence. It is therefore important that you submit your claim as soon as possible.
 - You may receive a different amount of compensation to that you would receive in your country of residence, because the applicable law of the country of the accident may result in different types and amounts of compensation.

For further information, please check the websites of:
Council of Europe

- Green card section
- Information on national information centres and compensation bodies

European Commission

- Information about motor insurance in Europe
- Information for consumers - national contact points

ACCIDENT STATEMENT				Sheet 01
Date of accident: _____		Time: _____	Locality: _____	Place: _____
Motor damage: <input type="checkbox"/> other than to vehicle A and B <input type="checkbox"/> to both other than vehicle A and B		Witnesses: Name(s), address, etc. _____		
VEHICLE A				
1. Insured party/holder (see insurance certificate)				
NAME: _____				
First name: _____				
Address: _____				
Postal code: _____ Country: _____				
Tel. or E-mail: _____				
2. Vehicle				
Make, type: _____				
Registration N°: _____				
Country of registration: _____				
3. Insurer company (see insurance certificate)				
NAME: _____				
Policy N°: _____				
Green Card N°: _____				
Insurance Certificate or Green Card valid from: _____ to: _____				
Agency or branch, or broker: _____				
NAME: _____				
Address: _____				
Country: _____				
Tel. or E-mail: _____				
Does this policy cover material damage to the vehicle? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no				
4. Driver (see driving licence)				
NAME: _____				
First name: _____				
Date of birth: _____				
Address: _____				
Country: _____				
Tel. or E-mail: _____				
Driving licence valid until: _____				
5. Indicate the point of initial impact to vehicle A by an arrow →				
				
6. My remarks: _____				
7. Signatures of the drivers				
A _____		B _____		
VEHICLE B				
8. Insured party/holder (see insurance certificate)				
NAME: _____				
First name: _____				
Address: _____				
Postal code: _____ Country: _____				
Tel. or E-mail: _____				
9. Vehicle				
Make, type: _____				
Registration N°: _____				
Country of registration: _____				
10. Insurer company (see insurance certificate)				
NAME: _____				
Policy N°: _____				
Green Card N°: _____				
Insurance Certificate or Green Card valid from: _____ to: _____				
Agency or branch, or broker: _____				
NAME: _____				
Address: _____				
Country: _____				
Tel. or E-mail: _____				
Does this policy cover material damage to the vehicle? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no				
11. Driver (see driving licence)				
NAME: _____				
First name: _____				
Date of birth: _____				
Address: _____				
Country: _____				
Tel. or E-mail: _____				
Driving licence valid until: _____				
12. Circumstances				
A. Reason to help explain the damage to the vehicle:				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. parking stopped				
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. backing a parking place / opening the door				
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. entering a parking place				
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. emerging from a car park / from private ground, from a track				
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. entering a car park / private ground, a track				
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. entering a roundabout				
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. circulating a roundabout				
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. driving the rear of the other vehicle while going in the same direction and in the same lane				
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. going in the same direction but in a different lane				
<input type="checkbox"/> 10. changing lanes				
<input type="checkbox"/> 11. overtaking				
<input type="checkbox"/> 12. turning to the right				
<input type="checkbox"/> 13. turning to the left				
<input type="checkbox"/> 14. reversing				
<input type="checkbox"/> 15. overtaking on a lane reserved for circulation in the opposite direction				
<input type="checkbox"/> 16. crossing the right of way junction				
<input type="checkbox"/> 17. had not observed right of way sign or a red light				
<input type="checkbox"/> 18. other number of events stipulated in a note				
Note to sign to both drivers: _____				
13. Indicate the point of initial impact to vehicle B by an arrow →				
				
14. My remarks: _____				



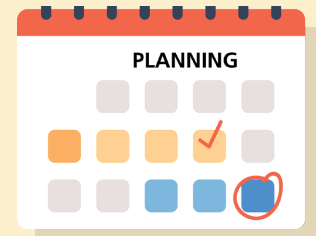
Exploring the world

Whether it is to visit far-flung destinations in search of adventure or simply to enjoy a relaxing family holiday, most of us will travel abroad during our lives. And as with other — perhaps more significant — life events, it is just as important to make sure that you carefully consider what you need for your trip.

Be prepared

Planning your trip well is essential. This not only includes planning your route and arranging a place to stay, but also making sure that you have all the appropriate equipment, such as snow tyres if you are taking your car on a winter holiday.

Before travelling, make sure you are up-to-date with the right vaccinations for the region you are visiting and check whether tap water is safe to drink. Also check on other potential risks, such as political unrest, natural catastrophes or terrorism.



Insure yourself wisely

Here are some things to consider when purchasing a travel insurance policy:

- Is it better to take out an individual policy or one that covers the entire family?
- Are you planning a single trip or would an annual policy be more appropriate?
- Where are you planning to travel? Are you protected in all the countries you will visit? A different policy may be necessary when travelling outside the EU, for example.
- Have you checked what may already be covered under your existing insurance policies (eg, home, motor, health) to avoid unnecessary overlaps?



Be sure you understand the terms and conditions of your insurance before you travel. This means paying particular attention to any excess or exclusions that apply. And if you are planning an active holiday, ensure you are covered for those sports or activities.

Don't forget to apply for the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) if your trip is within the European Economic Area (EU member states, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) or Switzerland. The card entitles you to free access to public healthcare. Bear in mind, though, that the EHIC does not cover the costs of all medical treatment (eg the costs of repatriation), so it should not be seen as a substitute for a private insurance policy. Please note that the EHIC is not valid in the UK after 31 December 2020.

Make sure that you are well covered for any trips outside Europe, as the costs of medical treatment in some countries, such as the USA, can be significantly higher than in your own.



Travel wisely

When you are on holiday, take all the precautions you can to protect your health and safety. Make sure your personal possessions are kept in a safe.

It is also worth making copies of all your travel documents, including your passport, visa and ID card, as this will make it easier to get replacements if they are lost or stolen.

If you do have a problem while you are on holiday, make sure you carry out all the necessary formalities, such as reporting a crime to the police, filing a luggage complaint with the airline, etc.

And ensure that you have your insurer's contact details with you, in case you need assistance or to make a claim.





More “InsureWisely” publications are available on the Insurance Europe website: www.insuranceeurope.eu/insure-wisely

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